5/24/72

Dear Jerry,

The tape came today. It was not delayed. The post office told you the cheapest way to send it, third class, which saved you 8¢, but that is the slowest class of mail. It is perfectly o.k. if there is no hurry, but if there is a hurry, a cassette in a thin cardboard box like this costs only 16¢ first class and in the thicker plastic box 24¢.

I will not return it until Bud and Jim have a chance to expand their understanding. To now they have had to take my word. Bud also knows the lady. I do not.

You made yourself clear and properly clear. If at any time he ever alleges otherwise, you did say you have no knowledge of any of the fact. From what Rife tells me, George even pretends to have had meetings with Rife that never occurred. I told Walter to write and ask him to specify when and where they took place. Walter has had no answer, he says.

In future conversations, if any, you need not repeat your claim to ignorance any more than necessary, but you might use them to find out what kind of help he wants. If he doesn't want to talk about it on the phone, ask him to write it out. Tell him that while you know nothing about the fact, and you know nothing ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ about his book, maybe there are some things that you could help him on. Then ask where he needs help. Tell him that I told you that as long as it doesn't help him badmouth any Ray or anyone else, you'd probably have no objection. You can tell him that you asked me about this because I am the only writer you know and you have seen from Frank and Huie what a writer who is hung up can wind up doing and you think I'd tell it to you straight. If he is sober or seems close to it, you can say that I said he has a couple of problems: delivering the contracted book not to be sued for his advance; Frank has creamed the market for goose-grease; and unless he has some proof that James is the assassin, his book can't amount to anything. If he shows a disposition to talk and you can pay for it, try to get him to blabbing about his relations with Foreman, how early they started, and why did Foreman ask Carol to help George. While others may have some interest in what he is going to say in his book, I really don't, except as it can relate to any kind of defense of James. It is for this reason that, as you know, I have the Foreman interest.

Play it by ear, but you might consider more. You can tell him that we met at the Chase Park Plaza when I was there to do the Fields show, that you and I both got there ahead of time and that I looked you up to talk. You can tell him that it is there you asked me why he keeps after you and I gave the above explanation. You can even go further, but be sure to leave out any intimation if know of his marital problems, and say that because of these reasons I asked you to understand the bad position he is in, having spent all that money and knowing, whether or not he will admit it, that the end product is garbage. Don't be afraid to use this word. Tell him I used it and that I think his situation is tragic because he has talent and because he was a friend of King's. And that subconsciously, the decency in him rebels at being part of a false claim to the solution to his friend's murder.

Because he is trying to get something out of you, you can always play the dumb country boy and ask him to explain things you can't understand, Foreman's action and his relations with Foreman being part. How could Foreman, knowing he was writing a book <u>against</u> James, as James' lawyer, ask James' family to help a man out to hurt James and his family? The clipping I sent you shows there was never any secret on this. So, how can saying James is guilty help James? Remember, he said this in a letter to James he doesn't know I have, that his book would live forever and would help James. How could calling him guilty help him, and how could his lawyer be part of this and still be looking out for James' interest? This is an element I think Bud and Jim can put to good use, if you can get anything on it. I think it is worth the effort. And if he calls during the day time, when it is possible he is not yet as drunk as he will get, after letting him know what you want explained, if the cost is getting too great, ask him to write it and send it by ~~xxx~~ mail so you can consider it because you can't afford the toll and you are sorry for him that he can't, either.

This means that if he writes you c/o Carol, she'll have to forward the letter, and if he calls you there, she can tell him how to reach you. If you don't want to pay for the calls, have her give him just the address, which will make him write.

Why Priscilla is so up tight about the calls, with all her loot, I really can't understand. It must reflect some thing else. When she has laid the same kind of egg, she could hardly hold that against him and be reasonable about it. But her anger, if not more, are as clear as his fear, which was close to hysteria. The change in his voice is quite sharp. It may have to do with their relationship, whatever its problems, or it may have to do with his not taking her advaice, just getting anything in tox get himself off the legal hook, if she gave him that advice.

There remains also the chance that he was crazy enough to show her my letters, or that she opened them if he was drunk. This could account for the persistence of his animosity toward me on the pretense that I had insulted his wife when it is he, not her, I insulted. There may have been a few things in those letters that may have made her wonder. That and his lack of literary output from the time of their marriage, apparently. Which makes her think he is living off of her.

Anyway, don't worry about doing the wrong thing unless you tell him anything, which would be wrong. It is difficult if not impossible to know what is right in situations like this. Just do whatever seems right whenever you have to make a decision and then hope that it turns out to be right. We never know in advance, really. by Jimmy?

As I told you I would, and as I started doing in St. Louis, I have been checking around for confirmation of the things people tell me. In the course of this, a forgotten fragment of the past returns, a backdoor visit to a restraurant kitchen and a couple of phone calls. Followed by an immediate disappearance, followed by a letter from downstate. If this might be something about which someone might have to be protected or defended, it would be good to know in advance. Any Ideas? I am not alone in having one. winnetka, where JER worked Gumy

Haven't heard from Jimmy since I was there. I'd expected to.

Before I get to other things, let me ask you about a man from the choo-choo town, of whom I'd forgotten and of whom I'd just heard again. He comes from a school whose field is not laid out as straight as I'd prefer. Beginning with did he recommend Paul Newman, I should know all about him. Whether or not he did recommend Paul Newman (and this is just a guess), I know enough about his past and one of his present activities to have a serious concern. I presume he is a friend of the lazy man. Again, this is only presumption. It would not be hard to learn, but it would take time I'd like to save. I am not alone in this, either. Remember the words of the philosopher I believe I once quoted to you, that those who do not learn by the past are doomed to relive it.

The wrong people only hold secrets, and the wrong people only do not have them. This is anything but a situation favorable for survival. Recently we talked about conflicts of interest. I can't help but wonder if this doesn't mean the same thing in a different way. You will remember that I was told recently about spinning wheels. The question is whose wheels are spinning and why. Maybe you can shed some light?

Sincerely,